

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION PLANS AND POLICIES
(PART 4—VIETNAM NEWS COVERAGE)

HEARING
BEFORE A
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
EIGHTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

MAY 24, 1963

Printed for the use of the
Committee on Government Operations



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1963

98-947

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

WILLIAM L. DAWSON, Illinois, *Chairman*

CHET HOLIFIELD, California	R. WALTER RIEHLMAN, New York
JACK BROOKS, Texas	GEORGE MEADER, Michigan
L. H. FOUNTAIN, North Carolina	CLARENCE J. BROWN, Ohio
PORTER HARDY, Jr., Virginia	FLORENCE P. DWYER, New Jersey
JOHN A. BLATNIK, Minnesota	ROBERT P. GRIFFIN, Michigan
ROBERT E. JONES, Alabama	GEORGE M. WALLHAUSER, New Jersey
EDWARD A. GARMATZ, Maryland	JOHN B. ANDERSON, Illinois
JOHN E. MOSS, California	RICHARD S. SCHWEIKER, Pennsylvania
DANTE B. FASCELL, Florida	OGDEN R. REID, New York
HENRY S. REUSS, Wisconsin	FRANK J. HORTON, New York
JOHN S. MONAGAN, Connecticut	BILL STINSON, Washington
RICHARD E. LANKFORD, Maryland	ROBERT MCCLORY, Illinois
TORBERT H. MACDONALD, Massachusetts	
J. EDWARD ROUSH, Indiana	
WILLIAM S. MOORHEAD, Pennsylvania	
CORNELIUS E. GALLAGHER, New Jersey	
WILLIAM J. RANDALL, Missouri	
BENJAMIN S. ROSENTHAL, New York	

CHRISTINE RAY DAVIS, *Staff Director*
JAMES A. LANIGAN, *General Counsel*
MILES Q. ROMNEY, *Associate General Counsel*
MALCOLM K. EDWARDS, *Minority Professional Staff*
J. P. CARLSON, *Minority Counsel*

FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE

JOHN E. MOSS, California, *Chairman*

PORTER HARDY, Jr., Virginia	GEORGE MEADER, Michigan
HENRY S. REUSS, Wisconsin	ROBERT P. GRIFFIN, Michigan
JOHN S. MONAGAN, Connecticut	OGDEN R. REID, New York
DANTE B. FASCELL, Florida	

SAMUEL J. ARCHIBALD, *Staff Administrator*
JACK MATTESON, *Chief Investigator*
BENNY L. KASS, *Counsel*
HELEN K. BEASLEY, *Clerk*

CONTENTS

Testimony of Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs; accompanied by Theodore Heavner, Deputy Director of Vietnam Working Group-----	Page 387
Letters, statements, etc., submitted for the record by—	
Griffin, Hon. Robert P., a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan: Excerpt from an article in the Washington Post, May 5, 1963, entitled "Vietnam News Guide Reported"-----	402
Hilsman, Roger, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs: Excerpt from news conference of Hon. Dean Rusk, Secretary of State:	
February 1, 1962-----	391
March 8, 1962-----	392
Information on the preparation of 1962 "press guidance" cable to American Embassy, Saigon-----	416
Summaries of three guidelines issued:	
Guideline 1 of May 4, 1963-----	416
Guideline 2 of May 11, 1963-----	416
Guideline 3 of January 4, 1963-----	416
Meador, Hon. George, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan: Excerpt from guideline 3 of January 4, 1963-----	415
Moss, Hon. John E., a Representative in Congress from the State of California, and chairman, Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee:	
Airgram No. 327 from Robert E. Barbour, second secretary of the American Embassy, Saigon, to the Department of State, December 19, 1962-----	404
Enclosure 1—Airgram No. 327 from Gen. Paul D. Harkins, U.S. Army, commander, Saigon, to all U.S. military adviser personnel in South Vietnam-----	405
Enclosure 2—Definitions—Ground rules for discussion with the press, interviews, press conferences, and press briefings-----	406
Article in the Washington Post, May 5, 1963, entitled "Vietnam News Guide Reported"-----	394
Excerpt from enclosure 1—Airgram No. 327 from Gen. Paul D. Harkins, U.S. Army, commander, Saigon, to all U.S. military adviser personnel in South Vietnam-----	409
Summaries of three guidelines issued:	
Guideline 1 of May 4, 1963-----	409
Guideline 2 of May 11, 1963-----	410
Guideline 3 of January 4, 1963-----	410
Reuss, Hon. Henry S., a Representative in Congress from the State of Wisconsin: Excerpt from an article in the Washington Post, May 5, 1963, entitled "Vietnam News Guide Reported"-----	395
Index-----	419

EXHIBIT

Exhibit I—Roger Hilsman sworn in as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, May 9, 1963-----	418
--	-----

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION PLANS AND POLICIES
(Part 4—Vietnam News Coverage)

FRIDAY, MAY 24, 1963

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND
GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
Washington, D.C.**

*(Portions of the testimony indicated by asterisks have
been deleted by the Department of State for the purpose of
protecting the national defense.)*

The subcommittee met in executive session,¹ pursuant to adjournment, at 10:15 a.m., in room 1501-B, Longworth Building, Hon. John E. Moss (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives John E. Moss, Porter Hardy, Jr., Henry S. Reuss, Dante B. Fascell, George Meader, and Robert P. Griffin.

Also present: Samuel J. Archibald, staff administrator; Jack Matteson, chief investigator, and Benny L. Kass, counsel.

Mr. Moss. The subcommittee will be in order.

Our witness this morning is the Honorable Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. Mr. Hilsman, before we start, you will be sworn. Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give this subcommittee shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. HILSMAN. I do.

Mr. Moss. Will you identify yourself for the record?

**TESTIMONY OF ROGER HILSMAN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS; ACCOMPANIED BY
THEODORE HEAVNER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF VIETNAM WORKING
GROUP**

Mr. HILSMAN. I am Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs.

Mr. Moss. And you have a statement?

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes; I have a statement.

Mr. Moss. Will you proceed?

Mr. HILSMAN. I am very glad to have a chance to talk with you, this subcommittee, about our press and information policy in Vietnam. Before discussing that policy and the reasons behind it, however, I would like to outline for you the context of that policy. By that I mean, of course, the Vietnam situation.

¹ This portion of the hearings were held in executive session. On August 15, 1963, the subcommittee ordered the transcript released.

This country, as you know, was divided between Communist North Vietnam and free South Vietnam as a result of the Geneva agreements of 1954. Following the division of the country, the United States extended substantial assistance to the government of President Ngo Dinh Diem in an effort to stabilize and protect the southern part of the country from further Communist aggression.

The joint efforts of our two governments realized a considerable degree of success in the years following the first Geneva Conference. Per capita income went up about 20 percent, food production rose more than 30 percent, the foundation for a modest industrial base was laid, with production in such key industries as textiles increasing from near zero to near self-sufficiency. In this same period, the Vietnamese wrote a constitution, elected a National Assembly, undertook an ambitious land reform program, tripled their school enrollment, and successfully resettled nearly a million refugees from Communist North Vietnam.

We all know the Communist reaction to this success story. In late 1959, certainly by 1960, it was clear that the Communists intended to overthrow the Government of Vietnam by force, and take it over in violation of the Geneva agreements. The strategy was that of organized terrorism—hit and run, night attacks, ambushes, assassinations, and intimidation of the civil population. The network of Communist subversive agents and cadres left behind in 1954 was activated, and new cadres, terrorists, and even whole military units were infiltrated across the border, and through the mountains and jungles of Laos.

By the fall of 1961 Communist attacks were running at the rate of well over 100 a week. A provincial capital was overrun and held overnight. The flow of commerce into Saigon was choked off to the point where we had to send Public Law 480 rice to what is normally one of Asia's rice basket areas.

The Vietnamese then requested increased American assistance to meet what had become an almost overwhelming threat to the continued existence of free Vietnam. They did not request American combat forces. And let me make this very clear, our role in Vietnam is not a combat role. The Vietnamese are fighting the war and they are directing the war. American assistance has been limited to technical, advisory, and logistic support.

We have a substantial number of American servicemen in Vietnam serving these functions. And although they are not combat forces, they have suffered casualties. This is because there are no front and rear areas in a war of terrorism; because to be effective as advisers our people must often be at or near the scene of fighting; and because the Communists have made our advisers a special target. The result is that we have suffered a total of 35 killed and 162 wounded to date as a result of enemy action in Vietnam.

For this reason alone, the Vietnam situation is one about which the American people need to be well informed. It is essential that the American people have available the fullest possible picture of what is happening in Vietnam and our role there. This has been the first principle of our press and information policy from the outset.

However, primary responsibility for access to the news in Vietnam rests with the Vietnamese. As I have said before, this is their struggle. It is their country, and to a very real degree, information on the Vietnam situation is their information.

We have of course felt from the beginning that it is in the interests of the Vietnamese Government to cooperate fully with the American press and we have so advised them. We have not been completely satisfied with the Vietnamese handling of press and information. They are, in this area as in many others, short of experienced and trained people. They lack the facilities and personnel for a full and free flow of information from all parts of their country. They are a newly independent nation laboring under the handicaps of a terrorist war, underdevelopment, and 2,000 years of authoritarian traditions—these factors do not make it easy for them to understand the free American press.

I might just note in this connection that we haven't been too long in understanding this. Woodrow Wilson was the first American President to hold a press conference, and Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first to hold them regularly. So it has taken us a while to develop mutually responsible relations between press and Government ourselves.

Given all their problems, it is only fair to say, however, that there has been a distinct improvement in the facilities which the Vietnamese have made available to the American press in recent months. They are holding more press conferences and generally doing a better job of making information available to the press.

For example, they recently held a press conference on herbicide operations in South Vietnam. Correspondents were given all the facts, including maps showing the areas involved, information on the chemical products used, and the strategic advantages of these programs. American correspondents who were present thought that it was a thorough and most helpful presentation.

Our Military Assistance Command Vietnam Public Information Officer and our public affairs officer from USIA work closely with the Vietnamese Director General of Information and Vietnamese Department of Defense in accrediting correspondents and providing facilities. Largely as a result of our suggestions, the Vietnamese Directorate General of Information initiated in December of last year a daily press briefing in both English and Vietnamese.

This is a new undertaking for the Vietnamese and they have not yet had time to build up the technical competence to which foreign newsmen are accustomed. Frequently their information has become "stale" before it is given to the reporters. The Government of Vietnam is not completely comfortable with this new institution and it will require time for them to build up confidence and competence in this area.

On our side, the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, holds a briefing on military developments daily. The Embassy does not hold scheduled briefings, but the Ambassador and other senior officials make themselves available as often as possible to reporters who request appointments—a procedure which the correspondents have indicated they prefer. To the best of my knowledge, there is no lack of access to American officials for newsmen.

Let me interpolate that I have, myself, twice gone to Vietnam, at the direction of the President, and on both occasions part of my instructions was to gather together the newsmen in Saigon and to talk to them about their problems there. I have come back in every instance with some ideas as to how we can help them better, and these ideas have been put into effect.

This is true not only of my trips there, but every major official, to my knowledge, that has gone there has had this on his docket and understands instructions.

The Embassy press attaché and the Military Assistance Command Vietnam Public Information Officer are experienced and competent individuals who devote full time to the reporters' requests for information. Our public affairs officer, John Mecklin, is a former newspaperman, with more than 20 years experience.

The U.S. Government recognizes that reporters should be given the widest possible access to news and information on Vietnam. At the same time we believe that military considerations and winning the war are also important. Where providing certain information would assist the enemy or disrupt sensitive negotiations, we have withheld that information until such time as it is no longer sensitive.

I think all reasonable men recognize that press accounts could assist the Viet-Cong if advance information was published on government plans. A free society is always under this disadvantage when fighting a war, cold or hot, with an enemy that spurns a free press. This does not mean that the U.S. Government favors restricting U.S. or other newsmen in Vietnam; the policy in fact is just the opposite—to be as forthcoming as the dictates of military security will permit.

We have tried to assign the most able information officers available to duty in Vietnam to help reporters get the information they want. We have instructed our officials, particularly the Ambassador and the commander of our military forces there to make themselves available to the press as frequently as possible.

We have also provided a great deal of military transportation for reporters, and have helped them, whenever possible, to visit combat or other areas. All correspondents resident in or visiting Saigon are afforded an equal opportunity to use Government air transport. Each correspondent is accredited by the Military Assistance Command Vietnam's Public Information Officer for the purpose of covering American activities and by the Government of Vietnam, for covering Vietnamese military activities. Correspondents ride on helicopters and other aircraft and accompany troops in the field. They are given space on troop-carrying land vehicles, including the highly successful M-113's and M-114's. The Vietnamese Air Force frequently provides transportation in their L-19, T-28, and C-47 aircraft. Correspondents are also able to accompany naval units during exercises and operations. I believe that the reporters are generally satisfied with the cooperation which they have had from our people, particularly in terms of getting where they want to go when they want to go there.

We recognize that the ban on newsmen covering the operations in zone D last November—in which dozens of U.S. helicopters and up to 150 Americans took part—aroused strong feelings among U.S. reporters in Vietnam. This was a specific mission in an area where the enemy was strong. As a matter of fact, it was the first time the Vietnamese forces had gotten into zone D; and as you know, the French never did get into zone D. Chances of casualties were high. There were casualties. The decision was made by the Government of Vietnam military leaders not to permit correspondents. U.S.

military advisers may have disagreed, but as advisers they do not have command authority.

Mr. MEADER. You say "may have disagreed." Did they disagree?

Mr. HILSMAN. Let me check on this, sir, about this. I think in a public statement we ought to leave it—

Mr. MEADER. This is not a public statement.

Mr. MOSS. You are in an executive session.

Mr. HILSMAN. Right, sir. This is an unclassified statement, which as I understood, Mr. Archibald, wanted to be able to publish freely.

Mr. MOSS. Yes. However, any response to questions based on the statement would not be released because the transcript here, Mr. Hilsman, is an executive transcript, and it will not be released at all until we have gone over it with you folks.

Mr. HILSMAN. I will have to check on that, sir, to be absolutely sure; neither Heavner or myself.

Mr. MEADER. This statement is more or less meaningless to say they may have disagreed. I could have said that and not know anything about it.

Mr. HILSMAN. Right, sir. The subcommittee can rest assured that the U.S. Government does not favor such restrictions in Vietnam any more than anywhere else.

I can say, for the record, that our policy certainly is the other way. That is our policy.

Now, in this particular instance, one of the reasons that I don't know is they may have never had a chance to, but this I will have to check on. I mean, our people may not have had a chance to disagree. But our policy is exactly the opposite. But where the United States is in the position of supporting an ally on the ally's home territory, it cannot presume to make command decisions. We can, and do, and will continue to urge the Government of Vietnam to understand the needs of the American press, and to be helpful to them.

Now I would like to speak, just for a moment, about a telegram to Saigon, of a year ago, on press and information matters which has figured recently in the news. The intent, the chief direction, and the result of that cable was to implement a policy of maximum feasible cooperation with the press. This policy is still in effect. Since that cable was sent, several ways to improve the implementation of this policy have been undertaken, and, as better ways are found in the future, they, too, will be instituted.

We feel that both Ambassador Nolting and General Harkins have fulfilled the purpose of this instruction to the greatest extent possible under the fast-moving wartime conditions with which they deal. Possibly, in some cases, they have not been able to make available, to newsmen, complete and accurate information in time to satisfy deadline requirements. Such occasions may and probably will occur in the future in spite of the best efforts of those in the field.

I would like to call attention again to the fact that the United States has urged the Government of Vietnam to provide better press facilities and to give the U.S. press better access to what is going on. On February 1, Secretary Rusk said in his news conference:

But let me say quite frankly that we have not been satisfied with the opportunities given to the press in Vietnam for full and candid coverage of the situation there, and we are discussing this matter from time to time and most urgently

with the Government of Vietnam. We can fully understand the difficulties faced by press representatives there and would like to see those dealt with as rapidly as possible, because under those conditions it is not easy to get a balanced picture of the situation. We hope that there could be some improvement not only in the situation in Vietnam, but in the availability of information about it in Vietnam to representatives of the press.

Again on March 8, the Secretary said in response to a question:

↙ We ourselves have tried to be more helpful directly with members of the press in the briefing problem out there; and I would think that there has been some improvement, but not yet wholly satisfactory.

To recapitulate, then, our basic policy regarding press relations in Vietnam is as follows:

1. To continue to provide the fullest possible cooperation to the press in order to make available to newsmen a fair, complete, and balanced picture of the complicated Vietnamese situation and the U.S. role in it.

2. To furnish reporters with comprehensive background information in order to be certain that their understanding of the situation is complete.

3. Where possible, to hold frequent preoperations briefings with the same purpose in mind, relying—as we know we can—on the responsibility of the reporters to delay publication until the information is no longer of value to the enemy.

4. To continue our efforts to persuade the Vietnamese Government to cooperate more fully with U.S. newsmen. Since the primary responsibility for access to the news is a Vietnamese one, the main effort to get the Vietnam story fully told must be Vietnamese also.

Quite frankly, we realize that there have been some shortcomings in the implementation of our press policy in Vietnam. We are making efforts to improve this situation, and we shall continue to do so.

We intend to continue our policy of full cooperation with the American press as it covers the Vietnam story. We are convinced that Americans have a very great stake in the outcome of the Vietnam struggle. A Communist victory there would devalue free world support in the face of Communist aggression throughout the world, thereby weakening the whole fabric of free world strength and determination. It would open all of southeast Asia, and to a degree India and Australia, to a greatly increased threat of Communist subversion and aggression. It would condemn 14 million people to a Communist regime they have fought hard to avoid, a Communist regime which nearly a million Vietnamese already have left their homes to escape. It is essential that the American people understand the importance of this Communist thrust against southeast Asia, and that they be kept well informed of our efforts to counter it. We hope for more, not less, public information on Vietnam and our role there, and we will do our best to provide it.

Mr. MEADER. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSS. Mr. Meader.

↘ Mr. MEADER. Mr. Hilsman, I note from your biographical sketch that you have not been in this position very long.

Mr. HILSMAN. That is correct, sir. (See exhibit I, p. 418.)

Mr. MEADER. Do you have with you people who have been familiar with the situation in Vietnam for the past 3 or 4 years, let's say?

Mr. HILSMAN. I do, but let me also say that I was director of intelligence of the Department of State for the last 2 years, and so

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION PLANS AND POLICIES 393

I am familiar perhaps not with all the details of some of the policy decisions, but I have been generally familiar with the Vietnamese situation through my former position.

ACCURACY OF VIETNAM STORIES

Mr. MEADER. I would like to ask whether or not the Vietnamese Government has given the press stories which were something less than completely accurate?

Mr. HILSMAN. * * *. Let me again, picking up from what I said in my statement, say you are dealing with a country which, first of all, has relatively few educated people, a very great lack of experienced and trained people, stemming from a Mandarin tradition that is quite different from ours, 2,000 years of authoritarian regimes.

I think it is interesting and important to note that under the present government, which has only been in since 1954, there have been held the first national elections that have ever been held in the history of Vietnam in 2,000 years, national elections, and only during the last year the first hamlet elections under the strategic hamlet program, where hamlet officials were elected, rather than appointed by the emperor or something else.

Now in a situation like this, they find it very difficult to understand the institutions of a free press and how it works. The whole cultural complex there is in another direction, so it is perfectly true—

Mr. MEADER. Mr. Hilsman, I don't want to interrupt you. I find this very interesting, but Mr. Reuss and I had the privilege of visiting in Saigon, and we met Diem. I see Mr. Hardy has come in. He was also there.

I understand Diem spent a good deal of his life in the United States. He is perfectly familiar with our customs, and he is the principal official of Vietnam and whatever may have been the case 2,000 years ago, or up until now, I think it would not be quite accurate to represent that Mr. Diem did not understand American systems of news coverage.

Mr. HILSMAN. Let me answer it this way, sir. We have not been satisfied with the South Vietnamese handling of the press, and we have gone to the lengths of making not only private protests to the Vietnamese Government, but Secretary Rusk, as I said in my statement, has twice said publicly that we were not satisfied with their handling of the press. So we are not satisfied with it. That is the short and straight answer.

Mr. MEADER. I am interested not only in suppression of news, but in the release of inaccurate news, news management, if you would like to use that term. Has there been news management by the Vietnamese Government?

Mr. HILSMAN. This is one of the things that we are not satisfied with the way the Vietnamese Government is handling the press.

Mr. MEADER. Do you have or does your staff have instances of statements publicly made which were inaccurate, which you can supply to the committee?

Mr. HILSMAN. I will check on this. * * *. Their briefings are improving. As I said, probably the best one they have done yet was on the herbicide operation. It was a model, really a model of a good press briefing that we thoroughly liked and would have been proud of ourselves, and so were the press pleased with this.

394 GOVERNMENT INFORMATION PLANS AND POLICIES

Mr. MEADER. I am thinking of the kind of a situation where they say that at such and such a place there was a battle and so many Vietcong were killed or wounded, and there wasn't any battle at all. I mean, have they done things like that?

Mr. HILSMAN. * * * You know it is difficult for us to go out and check on something that has already happened where maybe—

Mr. MEADER. We have people right with their troops, don't we?

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir. * * *

Mr. MOSS. Mr. Hardy.

Mr. HARDY. No, thank you.

Mr. MOSS. Mr. Griffin? Mr. Reuss?

Mr. REUSS. Mr. Chairman.

In your testimony, Mr. Hilsman, you referred to a cable sent last year to the Embassy in Saigon. Is that the cable which is contained in a classified document?

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. REUSS. Which has been distributed here?

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes. This is the cable I referred to in my statement.

Mr. REUSS. Yes. I would like to ask you some questions suggested by that cable. Incidentally, I first saw the cable about 5 minutes ago this morning.

I say that because I note that there was a Washington Post news story of May 5, 1963, containing some references to this classified document. The news story I also saw 5 minutes ago. I mention this for obvious reasons.

Mr. HILSMAN. Let me interject that the news story was grossly inaccurate and distorted.

Mr. MOSS. The news story referred to will be printed in the hearing. (The article referred to follows:)

(Washington Post, May 5, 1963)

VIETNAM NEWS GUIDE REPORTED

(By Geoffrey Gould)

A potentially explosive document in the hands of a House subcommittee is reported to contain administration guidelines for restricting the movements of American correspondents in South Vietnam.

Sources familiar with the document, which though a year old is still in effect, said it is a message to the American Ambassador in Saigon. They said it contains two main points on how to deal with U.S. newsmen trying to cover the Vietnamese war:

Keep American reporters away from areas where fighting is being done entirely or almost entirely by U.S. troops.

Keep American reporters away from any area which will show the extent of President Ngo Dinh Diem's failure to attract the full allegiance of the South Vietnamese people.

[While the State Department had no immediate comment last night about the alleged document, a spokesman strongly disputed the implication that the United States is impeding reporting from South Vietnam.

[On the contrary, he said, "Our people have been out there working hard to liberalize the Diem government's treatment of American correspondents for the last 8 or 10 months."

[The spokesman noted that Secretary of State Dean Rusk has reproached South Vietnam publicly for inhibiting reporting by American newsmen, and has called for corrective action.]

CLOSED HEARINGS SLATED

Pledged to secrecy, the House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Government Information plans to hold closed hearings on the directive later this

month. At issue is this: Is the document properly classified as a "confidential military secret" or is it being covered up because it might embarrass the Kennedy administration's relationship with the authoritarian Diem regime?

The document is signed by Rusk. In the cable jargon the State Department uses when communicating to field stations, it is labeled "Message to Amembassy, Saigon 1006."

ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES

The House subcommittee, conducting a wide-ranging inquiry into censorship and charges of news management, already has heard in public session Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester and his State Department counterpart, Robert Manning. Each is in charge of public information for his department.

They may be called back in closed session to testify about "Saigon 1006."

An official description of the South Vietnam news situation prepared by subcommittee staff members mentions that a "confidential State Department message to the American Ambassador in Saigon stated that 'more flexibility at the local level' was needed in dealing with U.S. newsmen covering the Vietnam operations."

But sources familiar with the document say it goes far beyond such general language.

Two members of the subcommittee have confirmed that they know of the existence of the message. Both say they have not actually seen it, but have been briefed on its contents, which seem certain to add fuel to outcries against alleged news management.

A June 30, 1962, letter from Sylvester to Representative John E. Moss, Democrat, of California, the subcommittee chairman, describes the order in general terms, calling it a "basic directive for U.S. reporters, issued February, 20, 1962." The letter says it is a joint State-Defense USIA message to the American Ambassador.

Among other things, Sylvester told Moss that "there is no censorship of press dispatches or other news material." This would not be inconsistent with the content of the order, which reportedly concerns the physical placement and travel of American reporters, rather than censorship of their written dispatches.

Mr. REUSS. Let me start on that. The news story, as I hastily read it, says that the cable contained two main points. They are news policy advice allegedly given to the American Ambassador in Saigon by the State Department:

Keep American reporters away from areas where fighting is being done entirely almost entirely by U.S. troops.

Is that contained in the cable?

Mr. HILSMAN. That is contained nowhere in the cable, sir. In fact, the thrust of the cable--well, let me say first of all that there are no areas where the fighting is being conducted--what were the phrases there?

Mr. REUSS. "Entirely or almost entirely."

Mr. HILSMAN. Either "entirely or almost entirely" by American forces. We are not in a combat role there, and the news story is grossly inaccurate in that. Nothing like that statement is contained in the cable, and in fact there are no areas where U.S. forces are engaged "entirely or almost entirely" in combat.

Mr. REUSS. The second alleged directive of the cable is as follows:

Keep American reporters away from any area which will show the extent of President Ngo Dinh Diem's failure to attract the full allegiance of the South Vietnamese people.

Is there such a directive in the cable?

Mr. HILSMAN. Nothing remotely similar to this in the cable, sir. And may I also add that the thrust and intent and result of the cable was to permit the greatest possible access to the news all over Vietnam to include all activities going on. That was the thrust, intent, purpose, and result of the cable.

CRITICISM OF DIEM

Mr. REUSS. Let me call your attention now to the cable. There is a section here on criticism of Diem and his government, to the effect that such criticism makes the war effort more difficult. The emphasis is on the fact that light, unjustified criticism of Diem by newsmen makes the war effort more difficult. Do you think that that is sound information policy?

Before you answer, let me disclose the reason why I ask it. I should think that complete honesty in reporting the credits and debits of the Vietnamese Government, where it succeeds and where it is not succeeding, with perhaps some constructive suggestions as to how it could succeed, would be a better news policy.

I realize you did not become Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs until April 25, 1963, but anyway you are here today, so what do you have to say about that?

Mr. HILSMAN. I quite agree with you, and notice there is no censorship here in Vietnam * * *.

Mr. REUSS. But if I may interrupt that is precisely what is not said here. Secretary Rusk said just the opposite * * *. I was suggesting that I disagreed with Rusk on that.

Mr. HILSMAN. I think the point here, and I am again speculating because I wasn't the author of the cable, as you pointed out, but I would think that what was meant here is that articles which quote a Government official of the United States as making a critical statement, even if he isn't identified, is difficult. It makes relations difficult.

Mr. REUSS. True, but we are reading English here, and nothing like that is said in Rusk's cable.

Mr. HILSMAN. That is correct. I might also add that I think this cable is very badly drafted.

Mr. REUSS. Shouldn't its revocation and the institution of a new news guidance cable be a rather early order of business for you as Secretary?

Mr. HILSMAN. Well, as a matter of fact this cable is only one of a long series of steps, all of which have been in the direction of liberalization and more information on the Vietnam situation.

There have been many instructions to Saigon on press policy. These instructions were frequently parts of other cables, dealing with other matters, where the press policy was made, you know, in the heat of events. So this cable is only one of a long series of "press guidances," let's call them, that are in the same direction.

I think we have made some mistakes in handling the press problem in Vietnam, but I think we have been improving as we have gone along. There have been a lot of things that have been improved, and certainly has been no lack of critical articles in the American press.

Mr. MEADER. Will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. REUSS. Yes. I am almost through, but let me yield to Mr. Meader.

CABLE BADLY DRAFTED

Mr. MEADER. I was very interested in your comment on this cable, that it was badly drafted. It is a little ambiguous, just what you meant by that. Do you mean that the phraseology was inept or do you think that the substance was inept?

Mr. HILSMAN. I meant that the policy guidelines in it were not precisely stated, but fuzzily stated.

Mr. MEADER. I think it is clear enough. I, having read the cable through hastily, think it is pretty clear this was an instruction to manage the news.

Mr. HILSMAN. I don't think so. May I call your attention to this paragraph? I don't know what that means. I can't find anybody who knows what it means. I can't find anybody who can give me a specific example.

Mr. GRIFFIN. This is the catchall.

Mr. HILSMAN. That I would say is lousy drafting.

Mr. HARDY. It is pretty clear to me.

Mr. REUSS. If I may reclaim the floor now, I would summarize as my own curbstone opinion that the cable is indeed a model of ambiguous draftsmanship on a matter that ought to be very clear. So often the fuzzy words mask the fuzzy thoughts.

Mr. HILSMAN. I quite agree.

Mr. REUSS. And I suggest that whoever wrote this cable for Dean Rusk hadn't thought through some of the problems. In addition, there may be, to those who can read this language more clearly than I, some of the things that Mr. Meader was mentioning.

All I am saying is that it seems to me very ambiguous indeed. When you are setting forth what amounts to a policy of something less than full and free press communication, I think you have to state the areas where the press is going to be denied complete freedom with precision and language that anybody can understand.

Mr. HILSMAN. Let me try to be a little more precise on this particular point. I think that our press policy should be that we do not attempt to guide what the American press says about the Vietnamese. I think it should also be our policy that members of the American mission there should not criticize the Vietnamese Government to anyone. After all, we are there in a foreign country.

Mr. REUSS. Yes, that of course is true, and they would be instantly persona non grata.

Mr. HILSMAN. Exactly.

Mr. REUSS. And put on a ship home, in accordance with immemorial diplomatic practice.

But what this implies is that if American correspondents find President Diem dragging his feet on land reform—as we found him to be dragging his feet on land reform back in 1957, Mr. Meader, when we visited with him—if American correspondents find that favoritism in the Government is destroying its mass base among the people, I think it is constructive to let those things be written in the hope that the light of truth will cause them to be corrected. Whatever may be said about a counter guerrilla operation such as that we are jointly conducting with the Vietnamese today, I think everyone would agree that an important ingredient in success is the confidence of the people that they have something to fight for. And if they are fighting for something that is corrupt and reactionary, they are not going to fight very hard. They are simply going to be a conduit for giving their rifles to the Communists.

Mr. HILSMAN. On such an example, first of all, we have no control over information about such things. We have no control over the articles written, and I think this is just a fuzzily written cable. I don't think this was the intention of it.

CRITICISM OF DIEM

Mr. REUSS. Except this passage isn't fuzzy. Rusk says critical articles are likely to impede the war effort.

Now the American Ambassador, in carrying that out it seems to me, has got to do his level best to suppress such articles. I think that is an unfortunate role in which to cast our representatives.

He does not want to say these things himself, but he certainly doesn't want to try to prevent correspondents of the free world from writing as they please on a matter like this.

Mr. HILSMAN. That is not the statement of policy as it stands today.

Mr. REUSS. Has it been countermanded or superseded by a later cable?

Mr. HILSMAN. There is a whole set of things. I think you can distinguish between a factual statement that critical articles do, in fact, make the war effort more difficult. That is a true and factual statement.

But if you go further than that and say we therefore should suppress them, that is not the policy. We have no means of suppressing them, no desire to suppress them.

Mr. REUSS. It does say that the Ambassador has overall authority in these matters.

Mr. HILSMAN. Let's turn it around and say this: What the Ambassador cannot do is suppress information or delay its publication.

Now there are two instances in which he has the authority to withhold information: One is the advance publication of military plans. * * *

The second category, where information is, as I have said in the statement, held back until it is no longer sensitive, is matters concerned with negotiations, cases in which there is a delicate and long-standing negotiation, you know. This would be cases where continuous negotiation is going on, and you don't want press stories about it until the negotiations are completed.

Mr. REUSS. And there, too, I would completely agree.

Mr. HILSMAN. That is right.

Mr. REUSS. That you are justified in restricting access. But what concerns me is a cable which, if the English language means anything, is Rusk telling Embassy Saigon that any newsman who writes anything uncomplimentary about that government is going to be left to stew in the salons of Saigon and can't get on a helicopter and go see anything. I don't think that is good.

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir. Whatever the language is and whatever it means, it was not so interpreted by our Ambassador. Nobody was ever denied any access or any facilities or any briefing as a result of critical stories.

And let me then say that whatever the language of this cable is, that is not the policy today as it is understood by Nolting and Harkins and all the rest.

NEW DIRECTIVE ON NEWS POLICY

Mr. REUSS. And in conclusion I did gather from what you said that it is your intention to see that a clearer directive on news policy is sent to Saigon in the near future.

Mr. HILSMAN. There have been several cables to date, the culmination of which supersede all this. As a matter of fact, we are off the record, it is a classified hearing, this is one, as a matter of fact—

Mr. FASCELL. You are not off the record, but it is a closed hearing.

Mr. HILSMAN. I am sorry, it is an executive hearing. We have sent instructions on a number of occasions to the Ambassador, which I think not only supersede this but clarify it.

Mr. MOSS. On this particular cable, I think we ought to take a look at what we actually have in the language here, this instruction or guideline. On my first reading of them, I did not feel that they were restrictive, nor intended that way.

Mr. FASCELL. I didn't either, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSS. * * *.

But this goes directly to light or imprudent criticism and I don't think any of us would urge a policy that encouraged such criticism.

Mr. REUSS. Mr. Chairman, on that I certainly am not in favor of such criticism, but here in this paragraph we do have a statement of what I assume is set up as an article of faith; namely, that critical articles will impede our war effort.

Mr. HILSMAN. But that is just a statement of fact, sir.

Mr. REUSS. Well, I am not sure that is so. I am not sure that our task is not made more difficult by the suspicion on the part of the American public that it isn't getting the true facts, good and bad.

Mr. HILSMAN. I quite agree with that.

Mr. MOSS. It is clearly stated that no effort should be made to forbid.

Mr. HILSMAN. Exactly. Notice that the policy directive as opposed to the explanation and discussion of contacts, is contained in the sentence to the effect that no effort should be made to forbid articles. That is the policy directive.

Mr. REUSS. Well, as I read it, the word "forbid" is in quotes, and this is a hint to the Ambassador that while he shouldn't "forbid" them—

Mr. HILSMAN. He can't forbid them.

Mr. REUSS. He should do everything short of "forbid" then.

Mr. HILSMAN. I think the point here is that the "forbid" is in quotes, that we all know that he has no power, no authority to forbid them.

What it means by that is that the pressman should not feel that he is trying to forbid. That is the meaning of the quotes there.

Mr. REUSS. Having said this, I don't mean to suggest that this entire cable is not in a proper direction of giving more access to the press than it has before, but I am disturbed by this particular reference which it would seem to me would stifle political reporting. I think political reporting is quite important; I hope it would not be frivolous or thoughtless, but sometimes frivolity and thoughtlessness is the price of a free press. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSS. Is the letter from General Harkins of December 1962 a more precise spelling out of policy?

Mr. HILSMAN. I think it is, sir, and this was a directive that went to every individual in the mission.

This cable went to the Ambassador, but the directive you saw, which is a statement of our policy to the individuals at the working

level throughout Vietnam, is, I think, a more precise statement of what our policy is. It is the one that has effect because it is the one that goes to the people who actually deal with the press.

Mr. REUSS. What is the date of that airgram?

Mr. MOSS. December 19, 1962.

Mr. REUSS. I see.

Mr. MEADER. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSS. Mr. Meader.

PREPARATION OF CABLE

Mr. MEADER. Mr. Hilsman, this cable seems to be a joint operation, State, Defense, and USIA. That implies that several minds were brought to bear on the drafting of this cable.

Are you at all familiar with the background of the preparation of this cable? Did you personally have any hand in it?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir; I did not. It was before my day, and I am afraid there is no one left in the Vietnamese task force that was there at that time. Mr. Wood was there, but Mr. Wood is now in Saigon on a trip.

Mr. MEADER. Would Mr. Harriman have had a part in the preparation of this cable?

Mr. HILSMAN. He would release it; yes, sir. He would have released it.

Mr. MEADER. Would he have been the final authority on the message and its dispatch to the American Embassy in Saigon?

Mr. HILSMAN. He would have been the signing officer, the final releasing officer; yes, sir.

Let me say on this cable. From what I do know of the circumstances under which it was prepared, this cable was, as many things are, drafted in a crisis situation.

But the purpose of the cable was to make sure that the field understood that American newsmen had the right and should be given accommodations on helicopters. That was the purpose of this cable, that space should be provided on helicopters and all other American-owned equipment for newspapermen. This was the purpose of it.

Mr. FASCELL. You mean free?

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MEADER. Do you know or do you not know the name of any individual who had a hand in the preparation of this message?

Mr. HILSMAN. I didn't understand the question, sir.

Mr. MEADER. I say do you know or do you not know the name of any individual who had a hand in the preparation of this message.

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir. It is a joint State-Defense-USIA message, and the people who would have responsibility in the field would be the Vietnamese.

Mr. MEADER. No, no. My question is the preparation of the cable, apparently a joint document, State, Defense, and USIA. You already said that Mr. Harriman would have final authority for the approval of the message and its dispatch to the Embassy.

Now what I am trying to get at is who, what individuals were involved in the preparation of this message. Were you?

Mr. FASCELL. If it will help you, George, I will say I prepared it.

Mr. HILSMAN. I don't have any firsthand information about that, sir.

Mr. MEADER. You don't know of any individual?

Mr. HILSMAN. I don't have any firsthand information on it. I think I could probably find out who participated in it.

Mr. MEADER. You say there is no one in this room?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir.

Mr. MEADER. None of your associates who had anything to do with the preparation?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir.

Mr. MEADER. And you don't know now of anybody who did have?

Mr. HILSMAN. I could check on it, sir. I know who has the constitutional and statutory authority. That I can answer.

Mr. MEADER. You have answered that—Mr. Harriman, and the Under Secretary of State. They must take ultimate responsibility.

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MEADER. My reaction to this cable is that it is an instruction to our people in Saigon to influence the slant of news stories that come out of Saigon. Do you agree with me that that is what the sum total of this cable is?

Mr. HILSMAN. Well, sir, I think that what the purpose of the cable is, the intent of the cable and the result of the cable, is to try to be more forthcoming with newspapermen about information of all kinds, while at the same time protecting military security.

PURPOSE OF CABLE

Mr. MEADER. It indicates to me that whoever sent this cable, Harriman or whoever it might be, wanted the Ambassador to induce newspapermen in Saigon to write certain kinds of stories.

Mr. HILSMAN. I don't think that was the purpose of the cable, sir, or the intent nor certainly the result of the cable.

Mr. MEADER. And you don't interpret the words in the cable—

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir.

Mr. MEADER (continuing). As indicating that purpose?

Mr. HILSMAN. I interpret the cable as I am pretty sure, as I am certain, it was interpreted in Saigon, because I have been there and talked to the Ambassador. I interpret the cable as a directive to be more forthcoming with newsmen, as forthcoming as possible consistent with military security, to provide newspapermen space on helicopters, to help them get access to the news, together with a discussion of the problems involved. These would include both policy problems with the Vietnamese Government and the military security problem.

Mr. MEADER. Let us just consider some of these statements. What about the paragraphs here which say, in effect, that our role is purely support and advisory in nature, that we don't conduct or manage any of the fighting, and that it is against our interest to have stories to the contrary?

Isn't this an instruction to the Ambassador to have newsmen write certain kinds of stories carrying out this line or this thought or this slant?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir, it is not.

Mr. MEADER. In their reporting of events in Vietnam?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir, it is not. You can sum up those two paragraphs by different words, by saying that the Ambassador should be sure that on these points the newsmen know and write the truth, because the fact of the matter -- and this goes to sloppy drafting, too -- the fact of the matter is we are not in command or directing this war.

The fact of the matter is we are not in a combat role in this war. This is the truth. And what the cable is really saying here is "for God's sake, make sure that the reporters get enough information so they will write the truth."

Mr. GRIFFIN. Will the gentleman yield to me right there?

Mr. MEADER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. On that point, and you have said over and over again they are supposed to have access to various areas, they are supposed to be able to ride on helicopters and so on and so forth, but this paragraph says in effect, that correspondents should not be taken on missions that might result in stories harmful to the war effort. It seems to me that undercuts everything you have said. The Gould story in the Post says:

Instructions are to keep American reporters away from areas where fighting is being done or almost entirely by U.S. troops.

Mr. HILSMAN. There is no such thing in the cable.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You say there is no such thing, but of course the best way for an American reporter to know that is for him to go along and see that that is the case. Now this is a very broad statement. What are the situations then when they are not allowed to take --

Mr. HILSMAN. I said a little earlier that I have been unable to find anybody who could supply me with a specific example of what was intended by that paragraph, or to supply me with an instance in which that paragraph, since this cable has been written, determined the decision or was a factor in the decision.

The only time I know that American reporters have been excluded from a helicopter mission in recent months is the Zone D operation, and that was a Vietnamese decision. They excluded reporters on grounds they were afraid one of the newsmen was going to get killed, because it was considered a very dangerous operation.

Now this excluding of American reporters from those helicopters in the Zone D operation in November was against our policy. The decision was made by the Vietnamese military commander.

That paragraph in the cable is a prize example of sloppy drafting, because no one knows what it means. It has no operational cutting edge.

CABLE BADLY DRAFTED

Now let me also say that the parts of the cable you picked out are again sloppy drafting. If we were writing this cable correctly, as it really was meant to be, and the intention behind the paragraph was really clear, it would say we want to make sure that newsmen thoroughly understand the situation and are under no misapprehension that we are fighting this war. The Vietnamese are fighting it and the Vietnamese are directing it.

Now that is what was meant by that section of the cable. It is badly drafted because it is subject to misinterpretation.

I don't think it is subject to misinterpretation by the people in Saigon, however, who know the role we play there. It is subject to misinterpretation here, as that newspaper story has misinterpreted it.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Your answer to my question is then despite this permissive authority given to the Ambassador to see that correspondents do not go on missions likely to result in stories harmful to the war effort, that correspondents have in fact always been allowed to go on missions, except in this one instance in November.

Mr. HILSMAN. I say yes, to my knowledge, since this cable. Now there may have been another example, but to my knowledge, my personal knowledge, since this cable has gone, the only operation on which correspondents were forbidden to go was the Zone D operation in November. This was not our decision. It was against our policy.

Mr. MEADER. I had yielded. If I may continue now. I would like to know, Mr. Hilsman, if there is anybody in the room that does know the background of the preparation of this document, who had a hand in it and knows how it was done. And if there were preliminary drafts, I would like to see them.

And second, I would like to have an answer to the question Mr. Reuss asked. Has this cable ever been rescinded?

Mr. HILSMAN. That is not the way procedures are handled in the Government. It has been superseded.

Mr. MEADER. Another layer of something?

Mr. HILSMAN. By layers on layers of cables.

Mr. MEADER. But this document is a joint document, joint State, Defense, and USIA message?

Mr. HILSMAN. I think I have a way of answering your question.

Mr. MEADER. The document dated December 19, 1962, which the chairman called attention to is a military instruction to military personnel. I would think, whatever its effect may be, it would not supersede a joint document of three agencies.

Mr. HILSMAN. The other document was a result of joint policy decisions, sir. The letter from General Harkins, that document is a statement of our present policy.

Mr. MEADER. Let me ask this question. Our Embassy personnel and other personnel in Saigon, are they still operating under the cable * * * today?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir. It has been many times superseded. But let me stress again that the major policy statement—

Mr. MEADER. Can you furnish us with the documents which supersede it?

GENERAL HARKINS' MEMO

Mr. HILSMAN. General Harkins' letter, sir.

Mr. MEADER. General Harkins' letter?

Mr. HILSMAN. Is a summation—

Mr. MEADER. Is that the only document that supersedes the cable of February 20?

Mr. HILSMAN. There are many—well, I wouldn't say that. Let's say that the General Harkins document is an accurate summation of the decision made between * * * and December 19 on this subject matter.

Mr. MEADER. Let's say I am the Ambassador in Saigon today. Do I forget completely about this document?

Mr. HILSMAN. Let me stress that the policy statement in the document is a statement moving toward liberalization of policy, toward providing transportation and everything else for the press. Now those provisions of the cable which call for providing transportation for the press et cetera are still in effect. We still do this.

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Chairman, could I just try to see if I can understand. I have a little trouble understanding how a memorandum from General Harkins can supersede one signed by Secretary Rusk.

Mr. HILSMAN. My point was, sir, that General Harkins' letter was a summation of press policy that had been made by the State Department, Defense Department jointly, and USIA.

Mr. HARDY. That may be, but I don't know whether it could be expected to be interpreted that way or not.

Now, General Harkins addressed his communication only to military advisory personnel. It was apparently distributed also—no, it was sent to the Department of State by Cincpac. Now that is real, real nice. General Harkins is out in the field and in a position of advising the Department of State as to what the general policy is.

Mr. HILSMAN. That is not the way it came about, sir.

Mr. Moss. Would the gentleman yield for a moment? I think the record should show that airgram No. 327 is from the American Embassy in Saigon to the Department of State. It is on information. The subject is "Guidance to U.S. Military Advisers on Press Relations."

The transmitting document is signed by Robert E. Barbour, Second Secretary of the Embassy. Included as part of it are the attachments. One of them is the directive to all U.S. military advisory personnel in South Vietnam from General Harkins. So it would appear to be a joint rather than a military document.

(The material referred to follows:)

Airgram No. 327.

Date: December 19, 1962.

To: Department of State.

Info: CINCPAC.

From: Amembassy Saigon.

Subject: MACV Guidance to U.S. Military Advisers on Press Relations.

Ref: CINCPAC also for POLAD

On November 24, General Harkins sent a letter addressed to all U.S. military advisory personnel providing them with guidance on relations with the press. The main points of this excellent letter are:

1. Advisers should make every effort to accommodate correspondents to the extent allowed by the local situation;
2. When discussing information with the press, advisers should always be sincere and truthful, but classified areas must be thoroughly understood by all military personnel and not touched upon; if an adviser would rather not discuss a question, he should say so;
3. It is good to remember that U.S. military personnel are in Vietnam to advise, assist and support the Vietnamese Government in its efforts to maintain its independence against Communist subversion; wherever possible, it is preferable that Vietnamese officers brief the press on operations and advisers should urge their counterparts to do so.
4. Regarding discussion of operations, the general techniques of the operation, the overall plan and any interesting and significant points may be discussed as long as the article is not published prior to the initiation of the plan or does not reveal the plan's details; U.S. support for the operation in general, not specific, terms and adviser participation are also good subjects;
5. Avoid discussing intelligence matters;
6. The American public has the right to maximum information concerning its armed services and their activities; this information should be limited only by restrictions imposed to safeguard the national interest.

Enclosed with General Harkins' letter was a paper giving ground rules for discussion with the press. Copies of both these documents are attached.

For the Ambassador:

ROBERT E. BARBOUR,
Second Secretary of the Embassy.

Enclosures: As noted above in text

[Enclosure 1—Airgram No. 327, From Saigon]

To: All U.S. Military Adviser Personnel in South Vietnam

1. This letter is intended as a guide to assist advisers in press relations. Many factors affect this relationship, some of which are general in nature and some of which are peculiar to the present situation in South Vietnam.
2. Advisers responsible for escorting or making arrangements for travel of correspondents, such as during an operation, should make every effort to accommodate the person to the maximum allowed by the local situation.
3. When discussing information with the press, advisers should always be sincere and truthful. Classified areas must be thoroughly understood by all military personnel and not touched upon, even obliquely. If questions involving classified matters arise, so inform the correspondent and explain why they cannot be discussed. (Example: "The answer to that question is, I'm sure you'll agree, something the VC would like to know, and is, therefore, classified.") All reputable members of the press respect the need for security and will not deliberately violate security information. On the other hand, never use security classification as an excuse for not answering a question or discussing a subject when the subject is not classified. This usually results in military embarrassment, distrust on the part of the press, and a great deal of personal anguish for the responsible individual. If a subject is touched upon which the adviser does not feel qualified to discuss, he should tell the correspondent that he is not in possession of all the facts and would like to check further. If it is something the adviser would rather not discuss for any reason, he should say so. This is the simplest way to solve the problem and certainly the most honest. He should not try to hide things which he thinks might result in "bad press". They are usually discovered anyway, and the resultant "bad press" is usually worse.
4. The adviser must, at all times, remember his relationship locally with his own counterpart and as a member of the American forces in Vietnam. It is good to remember that we are here to advise, assist and support the Vietnamese Government in its efforts to maintain its independence against communist subversion. Tying in past or future training with an operation being conducted may also be valuable.
5. Whenever possible, it is preferable that the Vietnamese Officers brief representatives of the press on operations as it is their war. Advisers should, in all cases, urge their counterparts to do so.
6. "Discussion of Operations is probably the area wherein the advisers will have the greatest problem deciding what can profitably be discussed. As a guide, the general techniques of the operation, the overall plan and any significant and interesting points may be discussed as long as it is not to be published prior to the initiation of the plan, or does not reveal the details of the operation. The American support for the operation in general terms, not specifics, plus adviser participation are also good adviser subjects. Whenever possible, it is desirable to give correspondents a good "background" briefing on the mission, the area, the general plan and other points of interest as long as such information can no longer compromise the situation. This may fall into the category of "background" briefing (Inclosure #1, Definition). It will allow the correspondents to view the coming operation in the same light as the adviser. Nothing that will aid or abet the enemy should be discussed with the correspondents, such as the number of troops or troop units involved, the number of helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft, landing zones, direction of attack, etc."
7. Avoid discussing intelligence matters, particularly sources or agencies, in order to preclude compromising future information. This is easily understood by the press who have their own code concerning disclosure of sources of information.
8. From time to time, guidance on release of sensitive information will be disseminated to all advisers. This guidance should be strictly adhered to.
9. The American public has the right to maximum information concerning its armed services and their activities. This information should be limited only by

restrictions imposed to safeguard the national interest. Advisers should, within reasonable bounds, attempt to comply with the need for a free flow of information.

PAUL D. HARKINS,
General, U.S. Army, Commander.

[Enclosure 2]

DEFINITIONS—GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESS, INTERVIEWS,
 PRESS CONFERENCES, AND PRESS BRIEFINGS

1. *General.*—There is no official glossary of terms for the various categories of news. What is set forth below represents the most widely used terms and their general meaning to the typical correspondent.

2. *Direct Quote.*—Remarks which may be quoted verbatim and attributed to a specific, identified source.

3. *Indirect Quote or Direct Attribution.*—Remarks which may be quoted in substance (but not verbatim), and which may be attributed to a specific, identified source.

4. *Off the Record.*—Information which is to be held in complete confidence. It is not to be printed under any circumstances or in any form. Nor is the information to be the subject of conversation except among those who were privileged to receive it. Off-the-record information is disseminated to give trusted correspondents special information which they need to grasp the significance of complicated news events. It is also used to orient correspondents with respect to important future events which will require special handling by a thoroughly informed press. It is an effective means of allaying undue press alarm over particular developments. The principal value of off-the-record information to the correspondent is that it permits him to report complex events intelligently, to avoid inaccuracies, and to recognize unfounded or false reports.

5. *Not for Attribution.*—Information which may be used by correspondents, provided the remarks are not attributed to a specific source, i.e., a source can be identified in general terms, i.e., "a Pentagon spokesman", or "a government official", or "a qualified authority", etc.

6. *Background.*—A confusing term used by some official with the intended meaning of either "off the record" or "not for attribution". Misunderstandings frequently arise when the term is used in this sense. The term should be used to describe information which may be used by correspondents entirely on their own responsibility. It differs from "not for attribution", as the remarks may not be attributed to a source even in the most general terms. Background information, then, is that information which correspondents use as though it were the product of their own original research. When used in this manner, no confusion is caused and correspondents receive information needed for understanding of complicated situations and developments.

7. *Definitions in Advance.*—The surest way for the official to avoid misunderstandings and embarrassment is to open the conference or interview with a clear and complete definition of terms and ground rules. Particular care should be taken to define what is meant by "background information", should the conference or interview get into this category of information. Additionally, the official must indicate with great clarity when he is moving from one category to another.

Mr. HILSMAN. That is correct, sir. And may I say that the way that the General Harkins letter came about was that under the various guidances that the Ambassador had gotten, and at the Ambassador's request, General Harkins prepared this letter. This action was undertaken with the advice and consent of the American Ambassador, and at the urging, at the suggestion, and in consonance with policy directives from Washington.

The letter is a reflection of policy directions from Washington, cleared with and prepared jointly with the Ambassador's staff. It is a summation of the directives received from Washington.

Mr. HARDY. That may be, Mr. Hilsman, but I don't see anything here that refers back to the specific documents which it summarizes.

I don't know, maybe General Harkins' letter, communication, airgram, or whatever it is, is a very fine statement of a very fine

policy, but it strikes me as being pretty unusual that this kind of a thing, signed by a military man, purports to represent the composite instruction in a memorandum which has been sent by the Department of State, which we haven't got any reference to here at all.

It goes from General Harkins to the military advisory personnel in South Vietnam, and it is sent by the Embassy, officially transmitted by the Embassy back to the Department of State.

Mr. HILSMAN. Sir, the way these things happen is that when General Harkins speaks to the people that work for him or when the United States—let's say when the U.S. Government speaks to the people who work for General Harkins on matters that are much broader than narrow military subjects, they speak to them through General Harkins.

BASIS FOR HARKINS' MEMO

Mr. HARDY. I understand that, and I don't have any problem with that.

General Harkins is speaking here to the U.S. military advisory personnel, which is entirely appropriate. But I haven't found a foundation for what General Harkins had to say.

Now the only thing I see here is that actually General Harkins may have enunciated a policy which should have come from the Department of State.

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir. His letter was prepared on the basis of instructions and in consultation with the Ambassador, in accordance with the policies laid down in Washington.

Mr. HARDY. Well, I don't know where he got those policy guidelines. We haven't anything here to indicate where they came from.

Mr. FASCELL. Right here.

Mr. HARDY. We have got that cablegram, but certainly he didn't get these policy statements from that cablegram.

Mr. FASCELL. Why not?

Mr. HILSMAN. They are consistent with it, sir.

Mr. FASCELL. Why not?

Mr. HARDY. Maybe you read it that way. I didn't.

Mr. FASCELL. I just asked the question.

Mr. HILSMAN. In a very real sense this is the interpretation that the field had of the guidelines we had given, including the cable, and they are consistent with it.

Mr. HARDY. And that is the interpretation which General Harkins placed upon this cablegram that we have been talking about.

Mr. FASCELL. Wait until you hear mine.

Mr. HILSMAN. And that the Ambassador did, sir.

Mr. HARDY. Well, let me raise just one other point and I am through. The cablegram itself carries a point which we have been discussing right much here a minute ago, about the part which American military personnel are playing in the fighting. It objects to stories indicating that Americans conduct and give the orders in combat operations.

Mr. HILSMAN. Because they are not conducting or ordering combat missions, sir.

Mr. HARDY. That may very well be, and I certainly am not going to take issue with it.

I would certainly agree that that is perhaps what the situation ought to be, and it certainly ought to be what we insist on happening.

However, from our own standpoint and from a knowledge of what is happening, maybe we ought to have a definition of what these words really mean.

Mr. HILSMAN, I make these observations strictly based on conversations and testimony that have been had in the Armed Services Committee.

Again, I say I don't want to suggest that our American military personnel are either directing or leading combat operations, but maybe we need a definition. If I had known that statement existed, I would have asked General Shoup for one.

Mr. HILSMAN. Sir, they are participating as advisers in combat operations. That is perfectly true.

Mr. HARDY. If you heard the testimony which was given before our committee in connection with a discussion that came up over the use of helicopters as a platform for firing in combat, I think you would understand why I would like to have a definition of these terms.

Mr. HILSMAN. I can only say that the policy is not that—

Mr. HARDY. I understand that, and I think it is a sound and proper policy. But again, for my information I would like to have a definition of what those words mean as they are applied in Vietnam.

Mr. FASCELL. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire?

Mr. MOSS. Mr. Fascell.

Mr. FASCELL. Thank you.

Mr. Hilsman, it seems to me that you have got a basic problem that won't be resolved and can't be resolved if the Ambassador is to be the sole person of responsibility in the area of operation. I assume he is, even in the context of a military operation of the nature, whatever that is, that is now going on in Vietnam.

I say that for this reason: for example, and without taking sides on the question of either the cablegram or whether or not it is superseded by some general's letter, I would suggest that you could find any motive you wanted to in the writing of either one. That is the first thing.

Secondly, I would suggest that the Ambassador or any ambassador could interpret it in any way he wants to, and that the cablegram and the letter are written exactly for those purposes. I don't think you could write a guideline in this kind of an operation.

The reason I make that statement and that conclusion, and it may not be valid, but I am making it anyway, is because in one paragraph of the cablegram you start out with a statement to the effect that this is a Vietnamese war. Well, I dare say that in the first place the Ambassador is going to have to interpret that the way he sees it.

Secondly, any newsman going anywhere seeing anything could interpret it exactly to the contrary. So if this is a policy statement as a guideline for the Ambassador to be a guideline for the newsmen, you start out with an impossible situation.

Mr. HARDY. Would the gentleman permit me to call his attention to an attitude of one of his Florida colleagues about the operations in Vietnam.

Mr. FASCELL. I didn't say that. That is what the cablegram said.

Mr. HARDY. I understand that. But South Vietnam and the operation in which we are participating over there was pretty largely the basis for including combat pay in the pay bill the other day.

Mr. FASCELL. That may be evidence which is adduced to make the point that I am making. I don't know. I would not want to say one way or the other whether there is or isn't.

Mr. HARDY. I wouldn't either.

Mr. FASCELL. How can you have any kind of guideline when you start out with fundamentals which can be interpreted by everybody differently.

You can't have a guideline. It is impossible. So we have got an exercise in futility on a moot question.

Mr. HARDY. I am inclined to agree with that.

Mr. FASCELL. I don't see any point in going into all the rest of the stuff, frankly. I don't know how you would operate it.

You would have to have an intelligent Ambassador working with the news guys, and he would have to be smart enough and politic enough not to get in trouble in spite of the fact that the military man writes down a firm guideline or the State Department writes down a firm guideline. I think the guy who wrote that cablegram, for example—and here again this is pure conjecture—wrote it so loose because he knew it wasn't going to be confidential very long.

Who are we kidding? Does the guideline really operate? In a military mission would you want it to operate if you were in command? I sure wouldn't. I'd say sure, write up a good one so when the press boys pick it up and print it in the newspaper, it looks good.

Mr. MEADER. You don't think this cablegram looks good in the newspapers, do you?

Mr. FASCELL. You could write one that looks good. I don't think it would be meaningful except it would keep us from having a hearing.

Mr. MEADER. You don't think this cablegram would look very good if it was published, do you?

Mr. FASCELL. This one?

Mr. MEADER. Yes.

Mr. FASCELL. It might not be too bad in certain places. It carries out our fundamental U.S. foreign policy, George, that this is not a U.S. war.

Now how can you beat that? You could write all the news stories coming out of the battle area that indicate that it wasn't, while you might be carrying out your foreign policy, I don't know.

Mr. Moss. If you gentlemen will refer to item 8 on General Harkins' letter:

From time to time guidance on release of sensitive information will be disseminated to all advisers. This guidance should be strictly adhered to.

We have just had phoned to us——

Mr. FASCELL. Another guidance?

NEW INFORMATION GUIDELINE

Mr. Moss. A summary of three guidances issued under that paragraph. The first one dated May 4, 1963, gives this instruction:

Generally the people dealing with correspondents should give them all possible unclassified information. However, the fact that newsmen go to the field with the military does not mean that they are entitled to the classified information and, therefore, they will not get any classified information.

Guideline 2 of May 11, 1963, states:

When correspondents are reporting downed aircraft and/or helicopters, they often report them as "shot down." Unless they actually know that such airplanes are in fact shot down, they should not use that terminology.

Guideline 3 dated January 4, 1963, states:

In commenting on the actions of the South Vietnamese, the reporters should not criticize them unless it is clearly warranted. We are in Vietnam in an advisory capacity and our responsibility is to help, not alienate.

Mr. FASCELL. I think that is a good guideline myself.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How is this guidance enforced?

Mr. HARDY. I think one thing we have got to keep in mind the point our colleague raised a while ago. This is not our war. That is a policy statement, and we have got to subscribe to that whether we believe it or not.

Mr. FASCELL. How can you do that? That is impossible. You can't make a newsman do it; that is the whole problem.

Mr. HARDY. I am not talking about the newsmen. I am talking about us.

Mr. FASCELL. I know, but this is the whole philosophical discussion that I have got into, and the reason I raised the issue.

How can you have any guideline for any newsman when you start out with the basic foreign policy assumption? Are you going to give that newsman the right to interpret the facts?

I mean, is this what we are talking about?

Mr. MOSS. However, we characterize our engagement in Vietnam, we are there and we are doing something.

Mr. FASCELL. That is right, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSS. But from a practical standpoint, if we are going to examine foreign policies of our Government, we have two ways of doing it:

(1) The nature of the complaints received by those actually covering these activities in Vietnam and,

(2) The nature of the instructions in the hands of the men who actually operate, and with whom the press maintains contact.

Now whatever the telegram to the Ambassador or the cablegram to the Ambassador might say, it is very much like some of the laws we pass here. Until we see the rules and regulations of the agencies, we don't know what we have written.

Mr. FASCELL. I agree with that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSS. And so the operational personnel are instructed in a certain manner.

Now we have the current instructions with the changes ordered under the paragraph 8 of those instructions. I think it is most pertinent to an inquiry on availability of information to examine the actual instructions to personnel who have contact with the press, to determine whether those instructions are such as to inhibit the gathering of news, to foreclose opportunity for a full viewing and reporting of the activities taking place in Vietnam.

Now the general nature of the complaint that we have received goes more to the Government of Vietnam than to the Government of the United States. To my knowledge the complaints voiced to me are frequently over lengthy delays in the transmission of information.

The briefings of the Vietnam Government have not been felt at all adequate, nor have the correspondents attending those briefings felt that they were always truthful.

What steps does the American Government, either through the members of the military missions or through the Embassy, take to make certain that our people are correctly informed? * * *

Mr. HILSMAN. I think that the summary of what the instructions are that have gone to the field, and also of my understanding as a result of talking personally with the Ambassador about it as to what our policy is, is recapitulated in my statement. This is it.

* * * * *

The herbicide briefing by the Vietnamese Government was an excellent one. It is our policy, as I say on this last page of my statement, to continue our efforts to persuade the Vietnamese Government to cooperate more fully with U.S. newsmen, and so on. This is our policy.

We are even looking into and have done something about trying to improve Vietnamese communications, not only for military purposes, but for press purposes.

This has been one of the problems as a matter of fact, and sometimes it would be much more in the Vietnamese interest as well as our interest if some of these stories of what happens up in the northern part of South Vietnam could get down faster.

The recent operations in Quang Ngai Province were really very successful operations, but the facts on it did not get to Saigon for 2 days. Now I don't know when they got to the Vietnamese Government, but they did not get to our people for 2 days after the operation.

The stories that had come out before indicated that the Quang Ngai operations had resulted in a defeat for government forces. These stories were based on rumor only. The facts were that it was a victory. We gave the correct information to the press; but by that time it was 2 days old, you see, so it did not get anywhere.

Now I only say this to indicate that it is in the Vietnamese interest that communications be more rapid and that information not be stale. We want to help them with this to the extent we can. * * *

Mr. MOSS. Now the briefings held by the Vietnamese Government, are those monitored by representatives either of our military forces or of the Embassy?

Mr. HILSMAN. We don't have the authority in Vietnam to monitor them, sir.

What we have done is to keep pressing them to conduct better and fuller, more complete, more accurate briefings, and offer to help, and we keep offering to help. * * *

Mr. MOSS. Now has the Government given study to the problem of the delays, the reasons for delays in transmission of stories? Sometimes they run 24 hours or more after the fact.

Mr. HILSMAN. Or even longer, 2 or 3 days. Yes, sir; we have, and we are trying to figure out ways that we can help the Vietnamese get quicker communications.

Some of it is just lack of communications. * * *

CURRENT PRESS POLICY

Mr. Moss. To your knowledge is there any effort on the part of the Government of Vietnam to censor any of the dispatches filed?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir. I have been unable to find any example of where they outright censored a cable.

There have been instances where they have delayed the transmission of a cable 2, 3, or even up to 10 hours, 10 or 12 hours, but no attempt to censor the cables. The press of course uses commercial cable channels.

Mr. Moss. Other than the guidances, is there any later general policy which has been circulated through the military personnel than that contained in the December 19, 1962?

Mr. HILSMAN. Not to my knowledge, sir, and let me point out again that my recapitulation at the end of my statement is a statement of our press policy.

Mr. Moss. And to your knowledge is there any policy of our Government, whether or not formalized, that attempts to prevent the publication of anything occurring in Vietnam at this time?

Mr. HILSMAN. Only those things that are military secrets, sir.

Mr. Moss. Only those things which are clearly military secrets?

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir; or during a delicate negotiation where we would want to withhold sensitive information until the negotiation was completed, until agreement.

Mr. Moss. Then you are not preventing publication?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir; delaying publication.

Mr. Moss. Delaying publication.

Mr. HILSMAN. In a question of current negotiations. Otherwise, we only withhold things that are national security secrets.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Mr. Chairman, when you finish I have a question.

Mr. Moss. Mr. Griffin.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I would like to go back to this paragraph of this cable signed by Secretary Rusk about seeing that correspondents do not go on missions likely to result in stories harmful to the war effort.

Can you point to anything in the so-called superseding letter of General Harkins which does supersede that particular paragraph?

Mr. HILSMAN. Sir, I am just totally unable to find out what the meaning of that paragraph is.

Mr. GRIFFIN. The meaning is quite clear, that the Ambassador has the authority to determine that correspondents will not be taken on certain missions likely to result in stories harmful to the war effort. It seems to me he has still got that authority.

Now whether or not he uses it, he has the authority, unless it has been taken away, and I don't find any specific language that takes it away. I come back to this particularly in view of the three guidances here that were subsequently issued, and noticing that they are not directed so much at our military people in the field as they are directed to the reporters.

Then I ask myself the question "Well, how would they enforce something like this?" and it would seem quite logical to think that they enforce it or could enforce it by granting or withholding permission of reporters to travel. Now if I am way off base, straighten me out.

Mr. HILSMAN. Let me say on my own authority, the Ambassador, what I was going to say is would not—the trouble is I can't think of a practical example of this, you see.

Mr. MOSS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes; gladly.

Mr. MOSS. I had planned on dealing with that, because it ties very nicely into No. 3 of the additional guidances.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes.

Mr. MOSS. Recognizing the deep concern of the American people and of the American press, and the fact that while you cannot at this moment, according to your statement, envision any circumstance that would justify this item, this paragraph, it seems to me that this is a case where there should be immediate clarification to the Ambassador.

I don't think that we can at any time justify as a matter of policy of our Government, whether it is fuzzily stated or otherwise, a suggestion that authority should be exercised to block access to information.

Mr. HILSMAN. I quite agree, sir.

Mr. MOSS. And I think there should be immediate steps taken to make it clear that no such authority was inferred or intended. We should not base policy on whether or not a dispatch is desirable or undesirable.

Mr. HILSMAN. I agree, sir.

Mr. MOSS. And in that matter I think that there appears a problem again, in these paragraphs of the directive. I can read them one way and get a different interpretation from others. But putting it together with the January 4 guidance, in commenting on the actions of these South Vietnamese, the reporter should not criticize them unless it is clearly warranted. I think that whether you will agree with me, a point of criticism is warranted. Men of good will will disagree.

Inherently here it says to me "discourage criticism, warranted or otherwise". I don't think we should discourage criticism as long as it is valid, and that is a matter of judgment.

You have someone over there who is reporting purely to sensationalize and to distort, and I imagine that any responsible publisher would shortly discourage his filing of such trivia.

But this guidance, taken together with the cable, I think could act as or could create the impression that our policy was actually to discourage any criticism, and that is not in our interest. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I think the point that I had in mind has been made, with the assistance of the chairman. Thank you.

Mr. REUSS. Mr. Chairman, just briefly I want to associate myself with what the chairman just said and what Mr. Griffin has just said.

I suggest, Secretary Hilsman, that what we have got here this morning are three distinct documents. One is a statement by you, Assistant Secretary Hilsman, this morning of May 24, 1963, which I found admirable. I think it is in good clear English.

It states a policy which protects our real security, yet doesn't go beyond it. I think it is a fine statement.

I also am encouraged by reading the December 1962 letter to military personnel of General Harkins. I think that statement—particularly paragraph 3 where the general has a heart-to-heart talk with his people about how you behave with the press—is an admirable document. I would like to see this made public.

I think far from being ashamed of it, that it is a very good statement.

Then you have the cable. I come to the following conclusions from studies of all three documents.

I think we have a good information policy for present circumstances in Vietnam, if we made it dependent upon your testimony this morning and on General Harkins' letter, and if we indicated to the field that the cable was herewith superseded by these two documents.

I think it is necessary after all, because the cable is signed by Rusk, and he is your boss, and you can hardly supersede him.

Secondly, the other good document in this series, the one by General Harkins of December 1962, is just addressed to military personnel. I don't think it has any effect on USIA, AID, the Embassy or anybody else who may be in Vietnam.

I don't think that there is a thing in the cable which is any good, which is not contained in later documents, and I think the simple way out of this, which I commend to you for consideration, is to use your May 24, 1963, statement, the December 1962 Harkins' statement, and to indicate to an Embassy Saigon that these are now the rules of the road.

Mr. Moss. Would the gentleman agree that this paragraph in the cable that there should be very clear indication that no such policy was intended, nor should any such policy be pursued at any time?

Mr. REUSS. And some of the other paragraphs of the cable are so ambiguous that I think it would be better not to try to patch them up, but let them be superseded.

CABLE TO BE REVISED

Mr. HILSMAN. May I say that my statement is the policy as it stands at this moment, and that this is well understood by the Ambassador.

Let me also say that one of the results of this session now is that, just to remove any possibility of any misunderstanding anywhere in Saigon, though I am confident there is no misunderstanding on the part of the Ambassador and his principal officers, but to remove any possibility of any misunderstanding, I think that we will send such a cable.

We will draft a cable and specifically say "this supersedes all previous ones," and recapitulate the points in my statement, for the field, and clarify any possibility of misunderstanding about some of these loosely worded, poorly drafted paragraphs in that Saigon cable.

[Note by subcommittee: We have been shown a confidential State Department cable sent to the American Embassy in Saigon shortly after the May 24, 1963, hearing and specifically rescinding the 1962 "press guidelines" concerning criticism of the Diem government.]

Mr. REUSS. I think that would be very useful.

Mr. HILSMAN. We will do this.

Mr. REUSS. Because whatever you may say, Mr. Hilsman, a Foreign Service officer reading his little clip book of cables, tends to accept as gospel anything that has not been revoked or superseded. Unless something is done about this cable, I think it will continue to be an incubus.

Mr. MEADER. I would just like to add to this discussion that these guidelines of January 4, 1963, May 4 and 11, 1963, seem to carry the same philosophy as the cable, which is aimed at shaping the content of news stories about Vietnam.

This one of January 4, for example—well, I say that the May 4 thing doesn't say anything as far as I can see, the fact that reporters are taken to the field. That doesn't give them access to classified information.

I don't think that was necessary to tell anybody intelligent enough to hold any position of responsibility for the United States in Vietnam.

The second one about shooting down aircraft, of that isn't true the reporter shouldn't say it. That is hardly necessary to say in a guideline, I would think.

But this third one of January 4, 1963,

in commenting on the actions of South Vietnam, the reporters should not criticize them unless it is clearly warranted.

Now, obviously to me, when you say "clearly warranted," who is going to decide whether it is clearly warranted? And when you do that, you are telling the people in Saigon "You get the newspaper reporters to write this kind of a story." That is the philosophy of the cable.

Mr. HILSMAN. I agree that this, too, is badly drafted, and with the chairman's permission, what I would like to do is take up with our Ambassador, to take up with General Harkins the insertion after "should not criticize them unless" the words "the reporters believe."

Mr. REUSS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEADER. Yes.

Mr. REUSS. I share his view, but what makes the January 4, 1963, directive that he is talking about particularly unsatisfactory is when it is taken in conjunction with the cable that Mr. Griffin has referred to, because that in effect seems to say that somebody who doesn't play ball doesn't get on the helicopter, and that I am sure is what the gentleman from Michigan does not want to have happen.

Now I don't think the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Meader, feels that there is anything wrong with instilling in the minds of our military and diplomatic people in Vietnam the idea that it does not help us to have frivolous and unwarranted criticism of the actions of the South Vietnamese. I think we all would agree with that.

Mr. MOSS. If the gentleman will yield, I think I should make it clear, as we attempted to do at the top of this memorandum you have before you, these are paraphrases of the three guidances. We will have the opportunity to study the precise language. The import seems to be as indicated here.

Mr. HILSMAN. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Heavner has the belief that since we got this over the telephone, there may have been an error and that the word "reporters" should read "advisers." That would change the whole thing, if the word "reporters" is "advisers." It will change the whole thing. Mr. Heavner says he would be surprised if it was really the word "reporters" there.

Mr. REUSS. If it is "advisers" then of course it is in accordance with the principle we discussed before. You become persona non grata if you criticize.

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MOSS. Are there further questions?

Mr. HILSMAN. The context, you see, of the January 4 guideline was after a rash of stories saying "U.S. military advisers criticized the

416 GOVERNMENT INFORMATION PLANS AND POLICIES

Vietnamese counterpart," et cetera, et cetera, and it is Mr. Heavner's belief that this ought to be checked, that it may well read "advisers" and not "reporters."

Mr. Moss. My view would change considerably if it is "advisers" and not "reporters."

Mr. HILSMAN. Well, it should be, let me say that.

(The following material was provided by the Department of State:)

These summaries were phoned in to the committee during the course of the hearing. On the basis of direct examination of the documents concerned, the summaries should read as follows:

Guideline 1 of May 4, 1963

"Generally the people dealing with correspondents should give them all possible unclassified information. However, the fact that newsmen go to the field with the military does not mean that they are entitled to the classified information and, therefore, they will not get any classified information."

Guideline 2 of May 11, 1963

"When advisers are reporting down aircraft and/or helicopters, they often report them as 'shot down.' Unless they actually know that such airplanes are in fact shot down, advisers should not use that terminology."

Guideline 3 dated January 4, 1963

"In commenting on the actions of the South Vietnamese military forces, advisers should not criticize them publicly. We are in Vietnam in an advisory capacity and our responsibility is to help, not alienate."

In particular, it should be noted that the words "correspondents" and "reporters" are, as phoned in, in error. The word actually used in the instructions referred to was "advisers."

PREPARATION OF CABLE

Mr. MEADER. I would just like to ask whether it is clear that we are going to get some additional information on the preparation of this cablegram.

Mr. HILSMAN. I will endeavor to find that out for you, sir.

(The following answer was provided by the Department of State:)

The telegram in question was prepared in accordance with general policy lines laid out by Secretary of State Rusk and the then Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, W. Averell Harriman. It was drafted by Carl T. Rowan, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, and now Ambassador to Finland. The Director of the Vietnam task force at the time this cable was prepared was Sterling J. Cottrell, now Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs. The message was cleared in the Department of Defense and in USIA, and was reviewed in draft at one of the periodic Honolulu conferences held by Secretary of Defense McNamara to review the Vietnam situation. Preparation of the message was coordinated, within the Department of State, with the Bureau of Public Affairs, for which Robert J. Manning is the Assistant Secretary.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I just want to footnote one thing that Congressman Reuss said, and then subsequently you alluded to it again.

That is, I hope that we are not encouraging the advance to the newsmen of military plans or anything. * * * I don't want my interest here to encourage that necessarily. That is not what we are talking about.

We are talking about facts and the events after they happen and the reporting of them. I don't know whether that needs any further discussion.

Mr. HILSMAN. Perhaps I did not sufficiently underline "consistent with military security."

* * * * *

Mr. GRIFFIN. I don't think he would be criticized for being on the side of caution there, and not assume risks in that area. But there is lots of criticism when newspapers can't have access to the things that actually occur.

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes.

Mr. MOSS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes.

Mr. MOSS. The very purpose of a briefing * * * is to make it possible for them to have access to the facts, and it follows the tradition of government during periods of war of dealing very candidly with the press.

I think a review of any of our wars will indicate that the press has been scrupulous in maintaining the confidence or keeping the confidence of the Government in these briefings.

Mr. HILSMAN. That is right. May I put one qualification to this, sir, and that is—and this I think is partly in answer to your statement—we cannot go as far nor do we go as far as we went in World War II and Korea. The reason we can't is that there is no censorship.

Now in both the Korean war and World War II correspondents' cables were censored, and a qualified military expert could say, "Look, you slipped here" but in the absence of such censorship, we can't be quite as forthcoming in advance as we were in World War II and Korea.

On balance everyone, press and ourselves, agree that it is better to do it this way than to try to institute censorship. * * *

Mr. MOSS. Are you aware of any serious breach of security on the part of these reporters in reporting on activities in Vietnam?

Mr. HILSMAN. Not in this instance, and this is another reason for doing it as much as we can, because the breaches of security, and there have been some, have been where the reporters picked up rumors and had not been briefed.

It is precisely in order to avoid this, where the reporting of a rumor would be accurate enough to cause casualties.

What we are trying to do is give them enough information so that they won't print the rumors because some of the rumors might be accurate. The war is conducted, as you know, in an extremely open fashion. Many of the operations go right out of Tan Son Nhut Airport, and people are in apartment houses nearby, and this is something of a handicap in fighting this sort of thing.

Mr. MOSS. Are there further questions? If not, I want to thank you for your testimony and the very cooperative attitude displayed toward the subcommittee in the course of our study.

Mr. HILSMAN. Thank you very much, sir.

(Whereupon, at 12 o'clock noon, the hearing was adjourned until 10 a.m., Monday, May 27, 1963.)

EXHIBIT I--ROGER HILSMAN SWORN IN AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, MAY 9, 1963

Roger Hilsman was sworn in today as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. Mr. Hilsman, who served until recently as Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, succeeds W. Averell Harriman. Mr. Harriman is presently serving as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

Roger Hilsman was born November 23, 1919, in Waco, Tex., the son of Col. and Mrs. Roger Hilsman, now of San Francisco, Calif. He attended public schools in Minneapolis, Minn., Manila, and Sacramento, Calif., and graduated from West Point in 1943.

Mr. Hilsman attained the rank of major in the U.S. Army and was wounded while serving with "Merrill's Marauders" in the China-Burma-India Theater in World War II. Later, he commanded a guerrilla battalion operating behind the enemy lines. In 1945, he was a member of a rescue mission that released his father, Colonel Hilsman, from a prisoner of war camp in Manchuria to which he had been removed after being captured in the Philippines in 1942.

Mr. Hilsman was awarded M.A. and Ph. D. degrees in international relations at Yale University after graduate work there from 1947 to 1950. For the next 3 years Mr. Hilsman was engaged in NATO planning in London and Frankfurt.

From 1953 to 1956, Mr. Hilsman was a member of the faculty of international politics at the Center for International Studies at Princeton University. From 1956 to 1961, he was successively Chief of the Foreign Affairs Division and Deputy Director of the Legislative Reference Service, Library of Congress. Mr. Hilsman was appointed the Director of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State on February 19, 1961, and Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs on April 25, 1963.

In addition to various articles, Mr. Hilsman is the author or coauthor of several books, including: "Strategic Intelligence and National Decisions," 1956; "Military Policy and National Security," 1956; "Alliance Policy in the Cold War," 1959; and "NATO and American Security," 1959.

Mrs. Hilsman is the former Eleanor W. Hoyt of Baltimore. They were married June 22, 1946, and have four children, Hoyt, aged 14; Amy, aged 12; Ashby, aged 6; and Sarah, 4 months.

INDEX

	Page
A	
Agency for International Development.....	414
Ambassador:	
Authority of.....	398, 412
Instructions to.....	399, 401, 403, 406
B	
Briefings.....	393, 411, 417
C	
Cablegram of 1962:	
Ambiguity of.....	396-397, 398, 412-413
Drafting of.....	396-397, 400, 402, 403
News story on.....	394, 402
Purpose of.....	391, 395, 400, 401, 402
Revision of.....	403, 414
Censorship, absence of.....	396, 417
Critical articles.....	396, 398, 413
D	
Defense, Department of.....	400
Delaying publication.....	398, 411-412
Diem, President Ngo Dinh:	
Criticism of.....	396, 398, 414, 415
Understanding of American press.....	393
E	
Embassy in Saigon.....	398, 399, 400, 414
Executive session.....	391, 399
Exhibit A.....	418
F	
Foreign policy in Vietnam.....	409
G	
Guidance on press relations.....	404, 406, 412
New guidances.....	409-411
Guidelines:	
Guideline 1 of May 4, 1963.....	409, 414, 416
Guideline 2 of May 11, 1963.....	410, 414, 416
Guideline 3 dated January 4, 1963.....	404, 410, 414-415, 416
H	
Harkins' memo of December 1962.....	399, 403, 409, 413
Basis for.....	404-409, 413, 414
Harriman, Ambassador at large.....	400, 401
Herbicide briefing.....	393, 411
Hilsman, Roger, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs:	
Biographical sketch (see exhibit I).....	392
Statement of.....	387
M	
Military advisers, disagreement of.....	391, 408
Military security.....	401, 416, 417
Monitoring Vietnamese briefings.....	411

	N	Page
New directive on news policy.....		398-400
News management.....		393, 397, 414
	P	
Press:		
Access to information.....		398, 402
Briefings.....		393, 411, 417
Complaints.....		410, 411
Contacts.....		399, 410
Restrictions on.....		395, 412, 413
Security breaches, absence of.....		417
Transportation for.....		402, 404, 412
Vietnam stories, accuracy of.....		393-395
	R	
Rusk, Secretary of State.....		397, 398, 412
	S	
Security secrets.....		412
State, Department of.....		400, 414, 416
State-Defense-USIA message. (See under Cablegram of 1962.)		
Suppression of news.....		398
	U	
U.S. Information Agency.....		400, 414
	V	
Vietnam:		
Information policy.....		393, 411, 412
Problems with Vietnamese Government.....		401
Situation in.....		393
	W	
Washington Post news story, May 5, 1963.....		394, 402
	Z	
Zone D.....		402-403